

Mountain West Men's Basketball Championship

Wednesday March 9, 2016



Larry Eustachy Emmanuel Omogbo Antwan Scott Colorado State

Colorado State - 80 San Jose State - 61

THE MODERATOR: Coach, if we can start with you and get some thoughts on today's game.

HEAD COACH LARRY EUSTACHY: Well, I thought we won the game before the game with our approach. We're just maturing daily. And sometimes even during the game we slip back into being directly spoken to and how you should play.

But we've had tremendous practices since our game against Air Force. And yesterday was real special. These guys are focused. Obviously we've had our ups and downs and very difficult times. But my mentor told me anytime you win 17 games you've had a great year. We hit 17.

But for a stretch in the second half for about four minutes where we turned it over and didn't rebound the ball, I thought we played terrific.

Q. This is your first time playing in a Mountain West tournament, even though you're both upperclassmen, how did you get off to a hot start?

ANTWAN SCOTT: The game before went to three overtimes. We were in the locker room chilling. I don't think there was no jitters, Coach prepared us well.

EMMANUEL OMOGBO: Just coming in today's game, me, Antwan, like the whole team, like we already talked about it, just take it one game at a time. Just don't be nervous, just come out there and try to get a win.

Q. Did this feel more like the team you guys were back when you were beating Northern Iowa in the first five games, did it feel like that team or more like the team that had struggles?

EMMANUEL OMOGBO: We feel more like a team now, like the coach told us, we're coming in together at the perfect time.

Q. You held them to 3 of 21 from three, and well

below 40 percent shooting from the field. Talk about your performance.

ANTWAN SCOTT: As Coach said, after the Air Force game we've been practicing, and that's one of the things emphasis is defense, defense and rebounding and working on our rotations and things really helped us. Coach Perry and Coach Eustachy always say tow the line now instead of being below the line, tow the line to keep the shooters from being comfortable. We towed the line, and we made them take deeper 3's than they're used to.

Q. Coach talked about you guys just yesterday in practice that he could sense you had your focus, you were dialed in. Could you sense that coming into this game?

ANTWAN SCOTT: I believe so. As Coach, he's always telling us about this is a very big game. And I think we all took that approach of it as it being a big game. We knew what was at stake, win or go home. And none of us are ready to go home.

Q. It looked like one of the better passing displays that you guys have put on all year. Not settling for your shots, really working the ball inside, being patient. Did you feel that way or did you feel like the ball moved better than it has at times this year?

ANTWAN SCOTT: Honestly I believe -- I don't think -- I think we just played together, as Coach has been telling us this all year, start inside out, and that's kind of what it was tonight. We're getting better at doing that.

EMMANUEL OMOGBO: We try to get a lot of paint touches, too. Coach Perry and Coach always yell out, Paint touches, paint touches. Drive in and kick it out, then you're going to get shooters open too and the big guys are going to score.

Q. What was maybe the difference with this game where you guys got the big lead early and you didn't really let up? You had other games this year where you had great first halves and you were unable to keep that tempo. What was the difference tonight?

EMMANUEL OMOGBO: We had urgency, the key word, urgency. Nothing else.

Q. Almost a double-double, 17 points, nine

rebounds. How long has it been since you had a double-double with rebounds or have you had one?

ANTWAN SCOTT: I haven't had one this year, but I've had one before. But that win looks better than the stats.

Q. Advanced and face Boise State tomorrow, what are your initial thoughts on that matchup?

ANTWAN SCOTT: It will be a great game. As Coach always says, defend, rebound, make plays at the end of the game and we'll be there.

EMMANUEL OMOGBO: It's just another game.

Q. Are you guys determined at all to kind of prove that win you had against them last time wasn't a fluke?

EMMANUEL OMOGBO: We're not worried about that.

ANTWAN SCOTT: We're focused on going out there tomorrow and trying to win.

Q. Either one of you, do you guys talk at all about what that 2003 CSU team did when they were the No. 6 team and won this tournament?

ANTWAN SCOTT: I don't know anything about it.

EMMANUEL OMOGBO: I have no idea.

HEAD COACH LARRY EUSTACHY: That's probably the worst question you've asked all year. They don't know who Ronald Reagan is (laughter).

Q. You had Marcus Fizer in there in the locker room with you guys after the game. What does it mean to have a player, especially from your past teams, but a team 16 years ago, come back and want to spend time around you and your team?

HEAD COACH LARRY EUSTACHY: Well, I thought what he said was -- brought me to tears about what we did for him. And believe me, we were the -- he got me the million dollar contract. We got him when he was young and didn't like to listen and when he left he was runner-up player of the year and fourth pick in the draft. And he explained about the process. And we got a lot of young guys going through that process right now.

But he was excellent. It goes so much farther when you've got the fourth pick in the draft standing in front of them telling them exactly what we say every day. And he got put in the State Hall of Fame. He was running up to Kenyon Martin, but because of injuries his career was cut short. But him and Jamaal Tinsley by far were players that impacted way more than anything.

Q. This is a team that San Jose State played you guys pretty close twice this season. Tonight you're in control start to finish. In your eyes what was the difference?

HEAD COACH LARRY EUSTACHY: I thought we were really focused. I mean this team -- I think you can just -- it kind of mirrors Jeremiah Paige. You see a guy developing into he's no longer a freshman. He's just playing through when things go wrong, which we've struggled to do all year, we still struggle to do it at times. It's never going to be perfect.

But, like I said, we won this game with our two practices before we played. I know we were sitting on a win just because of how in tune we were, how focused we were. It's a very unselfish team, but we were even more unselfish than normal. So you usually can tell, and I felt pretty comfortable. And they missed shots, but we had a lot to do with it.

Q. Are there any things beyond just any special things you noticed that you know in practice you can tell they're in tune or is it just kind of an overall feeling or is there certain things you can see that you know they're on?

HEAD COACH LARRY EUSTACHY: It's just an overall feel. I have the coaches go over the game plans a lot, and I sit back and watch our guys if they're listening or not, and they were really in tune to listening, which is hard to get the players to do these days, just to get them to listen and take it from the film room to the practice court and then show up in Las Vegas, that is not an easy art. And I thought our assistant coaches, give them all the credit, they did a great job for preparing this team and I just observed that we were as good as we've been.

What really helps this team is when guys like Jeremiah give you more depth, because you have more faith and trust in them and can play them longer.

It's been a work in progress. We've had our ups and downs. But you mentioned earlier that this was a team that doesn't seem like a team that won five straight. That team -- we beat Northern Iowa, which was misleading. That team was not nearly a team at that time. They've grown into being a team. And being a core of guys that really police each other and take care of each other. So major difference from Northern Iowa to Las Vegas today.

Q. You've had some great battles with Boise in the past. I would expect you would think it would be an up-tempo game tomorrow. What are some of the keys you guys need to do tomorrow in order to give yourself a chance to win?

HEAD COACH LARRY EUSTACHY: One game I

remember, I call it the \$300,000 game because I walked out on the court in Boise to talk to our team and I got a technical and we lost the game. And with that we lost the championship. And with that we lost the NCAA tournament bid. In my contract I have \$200,000 for an NCAA tournament bid and \$100,000 for a conference championship. That was a \$300,000 technical. That's the first thing that comes to my mind when you mention Boise State when you're 60 years old and looking for retirement (laughter).

In all seriousness, they did a tremendous job and they're very talented. We got beat twice by them. That shot counted, but under the circumstances it was called right by Dave Hall's crew. Basically we haven't beaten Boise State this year. And they have a lot of weapons and we have our hands full. They just can score from everywhere. I know they'll be focused. You don't want to play a team coming off a loss, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Q. Coach, Princeton scored 20 points in the two matchups this season. Did you game plan to stop him really in this?

HEAD COACH LARRY EUSTACHY: One yeah, he's their most talented player, and we knew when their plays broke down, it was going to get in his hand and he was going to drop his head and just drive it. I thought we did a great job of staying between him and the basket. Sometimes he's just too strong and got to the rim.

But there's no question who their best talent and player that impacts the most, and it's him. So we certainly were aware of how we had to play him.

Q. What does it mean for you and for the guys to get at least one more day, one more game together, especially for the seniors?

HEAD COACH LARRY EUSTACHY: I think it means a lot. And that's an understatement. Your fans come here. And you look at what Wyoming, Wyoming comes here, and they're very shorthanded and you go home. And I don't think as a coach you can be grateful enough that you win your first game. Because I've had the No. 3 team in the country lose in the second round, but the first game. And the championship, with the champions in it it was for naught.

This is our third out of four years we have won and continued to move on, I think. And I think it's huge. I think it's huge for everything we're trying to do, starting with our fan base and interest. And I think it's great for our players. They've earned it. They earned to advance. And I'm happy for them.